

Message Text

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PA-01 NEA-11 /158 W
-----115780 251925Z /45

R 251645Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7658
INFO USDOE WASHDC
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
AMCONSUL RIO JANIRO
AMCONSUL SAO PAULO
AMEMBASSY CARACAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 4 BRASILIA 4183

VIENNA FOR USIAEA
CARACAS FOR AMBASSADOR SAYRE

EO 11652 GDS
TAGS ENGR BR
SUBJECT: NUCLEAR ISSUE--REITERATION OF BRAZILIAN COMMITMENT TO
REPROCESSING

REF: BRASILIA 3986

BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL
1. IN WHAT CAN ONLY BE REGARDED AS A STRONG AND CAREFULLY ARGUED
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OPENING STATEMENT OF THE POSITION TO BE UPHELD BY THE
BRAZILIANS DURING AMBASSADOR SMITH'S JUNE 12-13 VISIT, NUCLEBRAS
PRESIDENT PAULO NOGUEIRA BATISTA OCCUPIED A FULL PAGE OF
SUNDAY'S (MAY 21) JORNAL DO BRAZIL TO DEFEND THE NUCLEAR PROGRAM
IN GENERAL AND REPROCESSING IN PARTICULAR AGAINST POINTED QUESTIONING
BY AN ANONYMOUS BUT WELL INFORMED JORNAL DO BRAZIL INTERVIEWER.
(NOTE: DATES OF THE SMITH VISIT HAVE NOT YET BEEN ANNOUNCED.)

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2. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. THE INTERVIEWER DREW ON DEPUTY UNDER-SECRETARY NYE'S FOREIGN POLICY ARTICLE IN FORMULATING HIS QUESTIONS, AND NOGUEIRA BATISTA'S REPLIES THUS RESPOND DIRECTLY TO MAJOR US POSITIONS. THE FOLLOWING IS A CONDENSED TRANSLATION OF THE INTERVIEW DESIGNED TO HIGHLIGHT THESE RESPONSES:

A. QUESTION: THE HIGH COST OF REPROCESSING MAKES IT UNLIKELY THAT PLUTONIUM WILL BECOME AN ECONOMICAL FUEL UNTIL THERE IS A SERIOUS SHORTAGE OF URANIUM. DOES BRAZIL NOT HAVE ENOUGH URANIUM? WHY DOES IT WANT TO REPROCESS?

ANSWER: THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT JUST APPROVED, BY THE OVERWHELMING VOTE OF 224 TO 80, THE CONSTRUCTION OF A REPROCESSING PLANT WITH A 1200 TON/YEAR CAPACITY, AT A COST OF US\$1.1 BILLION, TO REPROCESS THE WASTES OF 34 1,200 MW REACTORS WHICH COST ABOUT US\$1.5 BILLION EACH. THESE NUMBERS MAKE IT OBVIOUS THAT THE INITIAL INVESTMENT IN A RE-PROCESSING PLANT IS FAR FROM THE DECIDING FACTOR IN A DECISION TO BUILD ONE. REPROCESSING HAS TO BE EVALUATED IN TERMS OF ITS CONTRIBUTION TO THE SUPPLY OF ENERGY. SIMPLY RECYCLED IN LIGHT WATER REACTORS, REPROCESSED PLUTONIUM WILL REDUCE URANIUM CONSUMPTION BY ABOUT 1/3--IN TERMS OF BRAZILIAN RESERVES, IT WILL SAVE ABOUT 30,000 TONS, WORTH ABOUT US\$3 BILLION. BUT ITS REAL ADVANTAGE IS IN BREEDER REACTORS, WHICH ARE THE TRUE FUTURE OF NUCLEAR ENERGY. WITHOUT REPROCESSING, NUCLEAR ENERGY CANNOT

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BE USED ON A LARGE SCALE, BECAUSE THE WORLD SUPPLY OF URANIUM WILL BE EXHAUSTED WITHIN TWO DECADES. TO FOREGO REPROCESSING IS TO FOREGO NUCLEAR ENERGY, AND WITH THE EXHAUSTION OF OIL SUPPLIES AND OF EXPLOITABLE HYDROELECTRIC SOURCES, IT IS TO FOREGO PROGRESS ITSELF. THE SOLUTION IS OBVIOUSLY NOT TO BAN THE USE OF PLUTONIUM FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES BASED ON OVERESTIMATED ALLEGATIONS OF PROLIFERATION RISK, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME PRODUCING IT IN INCREASING QUANTITIES FOR WEAPONS PURPOSES, BUT IS RATHER TO PROMOTE ITS INTENSIVE USE FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES UNDER IAEA SAFEGUARDS FOR THE BENEFIT OF A WORLD HUNGRY FOR ENERGY. IN SUM, BRAZIL HAS THE NECESSARY URANIUM, BUT THIS DOES NOT MEAN WE CAN FOREGO REPROCESSING, WHICH IS REQUIRED FOR RATIONAL

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 4 BRASILIA 4183

MANAGEMENT OF OUR ENERGY RESOURCES THROUGH RECYCLING PLUTONIUM
EITHER IN LIGHT WATER REACTORS OR IN BREEDERS. IN THE FINAL
ANALYSIS, THE PLUTONIUM IS OURS ALSO.

B. QUESTION: LOCALLY-SUPERVISED REPROCESSING PLANTS RAISE THE
POSSIBILITY THAT IAEA CONTROLS WILL NOT PROVIDE TIMELY WARNING
OF CLANDESTINE DIVERSION OF PLUTONIUM TO WEAPONS USE. (1) DO
THE IAEA AFEGAURDS TO WHICH BRAZIL HAS AGREED GUARANTEE TIMELY
WARNING OF OR PREVENTION OF DEVIATION OF PLUTONIUM; AND (2)
WHAT MEASURES IS BRAZIL PREPARED TO TAKE IN ORDER NOT TO BECOME
AN AGENT OF PROLIFERATION;

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ANSWER: THE POSSIBILITY OF A COUNTRY CLANDESTINELY PRODUCING
NUCLEAR WEAPONS BY DIVERSION OF MATERIAL PRODUCED UNDER INTER-
NATIONAL SAFEGUARDS IS VERY REMOTE. IAEA SAFEGUARDS ON SENSITIVE
INSTALLATIONS SUCH AS REPROCESSING PLANTS INVOLVE PERMANENT
CONTROLS. ANY DIVERSION WOULD BE IMMEDIATELY DETECTED. IN ALL
CASES WHERE COUNTRIES HAVE MANUFACTURED NUCLEAR WEAPONS OR
EXPLOSIVES, THIS WAS DONE OUTSIDE IAEA SAFEGUARDS. IT IS THUS
TOTALLY INADEQUATE TO SPEAK OF VIOLATION OF OR THE INSUFFICIENCY
OF IAEA SAFEGUARDS TAKING AS A POINT OF REFERENCE SITUATIONS IN

WHICH THE SAFEGUARDS WERE NOT BEING APPLIED. THE SAFEGUARDS AGREEMENT BETWEEN BRAZIL AND THE IAEA IS AMONG THE MOST COMPLETE IN EXISTENCE, BECAUSE IT APPLIES NOT ONLY TO THE FRG-BRAZIL NUCLEAR ACCORD BUT ALSO TO ANY FACILITIES BRAZIL MIGHT BUILD WITH THE ACQUIRED TECHNOLOGY AND REQUIRES ACCEPTANCE OF SAFEGUARDS BY ANY COUNTRIES TO WHICH BRAZIL MIGHT EXPORT NUCLEAR EQUIPMENT, THUS MAKING BRAZIL AN AGENT OF NON-PROLIFERATION.

C. QUESTION: WHAT PORTION OF BRAZIL'S ELECTRIC POWER WILL BE PRODUCED BY NUCLEAR PLANTS IN THE YEAR 2000? HOW MUCH WILL RECYCLED PLUTONIUM REPRESENT IN SAVINGS IN THAT YEAR?

ANSWER: IN 1990, NUCLEAR PLANTS WILL PRODUCE ABOUT 18 PERCENT OF BRAZILIAN ELECTRICAL POWER. BY THE END OF THE CENTURY, THEY WILL PRODUCE OVER 50 PERCENT. THE STRATEGY FOR PLUTONIUM USE HAS OBVIOUSLY NOT YET BEEN FULLY DEFINED, BUT IF ALL RECOVERED MATERIAL IS RECYCLED IN LIGHT WATER REACTORS, THE CUMULATIVE SAVING OF URANIUM CONCENTRATE WOULD BE ON THE ORDER OF 25,000 TONS THROUGH THE END OF THE CENTURY--I.E.E., INSTEAD OF CONSUMING 70,000 TONS WE WOULD CONSUME 45,000 TONS, AND OUR CUMULATIVE CONSUMPTION THROUGH THE YEAR 2000, WHEN WE SHOULD HAVE 75,000MW OF NUCLEAR GENERATING CAPACITY INSTALLED, WOULD BE LESS THAN OUR CURRENTLY DEFINED RESERVES. THE USE OF BREEDERS WOULD MAKE THE SAVING GREATER.

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D. QUESTION: DOES THE SCALE OF THE BRAZIL-FRG NUCLEAR ACCORD JUSTIFY A REPROCESSING PLANT, AND HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

ANSWER: BY THE YEAR 2000, THE ANTICIPATED INSTALLED CAPACITY OF ABOUT 75,000 MW WILL FULLY MUSTIFY A REPROCESSING PLANT WITH A 1,500 TON/YEAR CAPACITY, WHICH IS NOW CONSIDERED OPTIMAL SIZE. AS IT HAPPENS, CONSIDERATIONS OF GUARANTEED FUEL SUPPLY, FOREIGN EXCHANGE SAVINGS, AND URANIUM SUPPLY SAVINGS FULLY JUSTIFY SMALLER REPROCESSING CAPACITIES, WHICH WILL STILL INVOLVE LESS THAN 10 PERCENT OF TOTAL FUEL PRODUCTION COSTS AND WILL BE MORE THAN COMPENSATED FOR BY THE SAVINGS RESULTING FROM ELIMINATION OF SPENT FUEL STORAGE FACILITIES. WE WILL BEGIN WITH A SMALLER REPROCESSING FACILITY, APPROPRIATE FOR THE INITIAL SCOPE OF THE NUCLEAR GENERATING PROGRAM, WHICH WILL COST ABOUT US\$120 MILLION. A COMMERCIAL SCALE REPROCESSING PLANT SHOULD BE CONSTRUCTED IN THE 1990'S.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 3 OF 4 BRASILIA 4183

E. QUESTION: WHAT IS THE TOTAL COST OF THE NUCLEAR PROGRAM?
ANSWER: ABOUT US\$13 BILLION. THERE ARE EIGHT GENERATING
PLANTS AT APPROXIMATELY US\$1 BILLION 600 MILLION EACH.

F. QUESTION: IS THORIUM IN FACT A PROLIFERATION/PROOF URANIUM
SUBSTITUTE?
ANSWER: USING THORIUM AS A NUCLEAR FUEL PRSUPPOSES THE PRESENCE
OF HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM IN AN INITIAL STAGE AND REPROCESSING
IN ORDER TO OBTAIN URANIUM 233 FOR SUBSEQUENT RECYCLING. THORIUM
OFFERS NO ADVANTAGE FROM A NON-PROLIFERATION VIEWPOINT BECAUSE
URANIUM 233 IS AS GOOD FOR BOMB-MAKING AS ARE URANIUM 235 AND
PLUTONIUM 239. THE STUDY OF THORIUM UTILICATION IS JUSTIFIED AS
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A MEANS OF INCREASING AVAILABLE NUCLEAR FUEL SUPPLIES, BUT NOT ON
NON-PROLIFERATION GROUNDS.

G. QUESTION: WHY NOT ACCEPT MULTINATIONALIZATION OF REPROCESSING,
PROVIDED THE FACILITY BE IN BRAZIL?

ANSWER: THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A CLEAR FORMAL PROPOSAL FOR CREATION OF REGIONAL MULTINATIONAL REPROCESSING CENTERS, ALTHOUGH THE POSSIBILITY WAS MENTIONED BY THE USG DURING THE FORD ADMINISTRATION. HOWEVER, THE FUNDAMENTAL POLITICAL AND TECHNICAL QUESTIONS, SUCH AS ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY, COMMERCIAL TERMS, GUARANTEE OF SUPPLY, AND LOCATION OF THE PLANTS WERE NEVER ADDRESSED. IT IS INCONCEIVABLE THAT A COUNTRY WITH A MAJOR NUCLEAR PROGRAM WITH DETERMINED TARGET DATES SHOULD SUBJECT ITSELF TO SUCH UNCERTAINTIES. WE SHOULD ALSO NOT FORGET THAT THE PRESENT US ADMINISTRATION HAS, AT LEAST UNTIL NOW, EXCLUDED THE POSSIBILITY OF EVEN MULTINATIONAL REPROCESSING, BECAUSE ITS IDEA IS TO SIMPLY BAN THE USE OF PLUTONIUM, EVEN UNDER IAEA SAFEGUARDS.

H. QUESTION: QUOTING PRESIDENT CARTER, DEPUTY UNDERSECRETARY NYE SAYS THAT HE HAS NO OBJECTION TO FAST BREEDERS, BUT SIMPLY DOES NOT THINK THEIR TIME HAS COME. WHY HAS THE TIME COME FOR BRAZIL? WHY CAN BRAZIL NOT WAIT UNTIL A TECHNICAL MEANS IS FOUND TO PREVENT USE OF PEACEFUL NUCLEAR PROGRAMS FOR MILITARY PURPOSES? HOW DOES BRAZIL PROPOSE TO OBTAIN FAST BREEDERS?

ANSWER: I CANNOT AGREE THAT THE USG HAS NO OBJECTIONS TO FAST BREEDERS. QUITE THE CONTRARY, THE USG OPPOSITION TO REPROCESSING IS DIRECTLY LINKED TO THE USE OF PLUTONIUM IN BREEDERS. THE USG HAS SUSPENDED ITS OWN BREEDER PROGRAM AND HAS INSISTENTLY INVITED THE EUROPEANS AND JAPANESE TO DO THE SAME. THE EXPLANATION CAN POSSIBLY BE FOUND IN THE FACT THAT THE US HAS CAN POSSIBLY BE FOUND IN THE FACT THAT THE US HAS (1) THE WORLD'S LARGEST URANIUM RESERVES, BEING A SORT OF SAUDI ARABIA OF URANIUM; CONFIDENTIAL

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(2) THE WORLD'S LARGEST RESERVES OF COAL; AND (3) FULL MASTERY OF REPROCESSING TECHNOLOGY, OF WHICH THEY MAKE AMPLE USE FOR MILITARY PURPOSES. UNDER SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES, OTHER COUNTRIES MIGHT ALSO TAKE THEIR TIME. THE NPT PROHIBITS NUCLEAR WEAPONS, NOT TRANSFER OF NUCLEAR MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGY. IT IN FACT ENCOURAGES TRANSFER OF MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGY UNDER SAFEGUARDS, AND COUNTRIES WHICH PLACE OBSTACLES ON MATERIAL AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFERS UNDER SAFEGUARDS ARE ACTING CONTRARY TO THE SPIRIT OF THE NPT, AS WELL AS THE STATUTES OF THE IAEA. BRAZILIAN NEEDS REQUIRE LARGE-SCALE NUCLEAR POWER USE, WHICH WILL ONLY BE POSSIBLE BY RECYCLING REPROCESSED PLUTONIUM IN LIGHT WATER AND FUTURE FAST BREEDER REACTORS. BY THE END OF THE CENTURY, WE SHOULD HAVE STOCKED ENOUGH PLUTONIUM TO OPERATE A NUMBER OF BREEDERS AND WE WILL ACQUIRE BREEDERS THROUGH OUR OWN TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT AND IN ASSOCIATION WITH NATIONS WHICH ALREADY HAVE THE TECHNOLOGY SUCH AS THE FRG.

I. QUESTION: WHY DOES BRAZIL NOT SUPPORT THE CARTER PROPOSAL FOR INTERNATIONAL BANKS OF LOW-

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ENRICHED URANIUM?

ANSWER: THERE IS, PROPERLY SPAKING, NO SUCH PROPOSAL. THERE IS
A REQUIREMENT IN THE NEW US NUCLEAR EXPORT LAW FOR THE PRESIDENT
TO CONSIDER THIS ALONG WITH OTHER MEASURES TO RE-ESTABLISH THE
US' CREDIBILITY AS A SUPPLIER. BUT IT IS NOT REASONABLE TO EXPECT
OTHER NATIONS TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES ON THE ASIS OF SUCH LIMITED
INFORMATION. THE ONLY THING WHICH I COULD SAY AT THIS POINT IS
THAT THE IAEA IS AUTHORIZED BY ITS STATUTES TO PERFORM THIS ROLE.

J. QUESTION: WHY IS THE GREATEST US PRESSURE AGAINST REPROCESSING
AND NOT ENRICHMENTB?

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ANSWER: THE HIGH ENRICHMENT NECESSARY FOR WEAPONS IS TECHNICALLY MORE COMPLEX THAN REPROCESSING. NONETHELESS, REPROCESSING IS MUCH MORE NECESSARY FOR FULL PEACEFUL USE OF NUCLEAR ENERGY, AND ITS MONOPOLICATION IS MUCH MORE SIGNIFICANT IN TERMS OF ITS EFFECT ON WORLD ENERGY SUPPLIES.

K. QUESTION: IF BRAZIL DOES NOT WANT THE BOMB, WHY ARE THE AMERICANS SO SENSITIVE ABOUT OUR NUCLEAR PROGRAM? OR IS IT THAT BRAZIL DOES WANT A BOMB?

ANSWER: WHEN ONE HAS A PRIVILEGE OR AN ADVANTAGE, IT IS UNDERSTANDABLE TO ATTEMPT TO JEALOUSLY GUARD IT. THIS IS EVEN MORE UNDERSTANDABLE AMONG NUCLEAR WEAPONS STATES, BECAUSE OF THE DESTRUCTIVE POWER OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND THE THREAT THEIR PROLIFERATION WOULD POSE TO THE DELICATE BALANCE OF POWER BY WHICH WORLD PEACE IS SUSTAINED. FROM THIS PERSPECTIVE IT IS EXPLICABLE, EVEN IF NOT JUSTIFIABLE, THAT NUCLEAR WEAPONS STATES ATTEMPT TO RESTRICT TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER AND VIEW WITH SUSPICION THE NUCLEAR PROGRAMS OF OTHER COUNTRIES. NONETHELESS, IN EVALUATING THE NUCLEAR INTENTIONS OF A COUNTRY, ONE HAS TO CONSIDER ITS RECORD AS A PEACEFUL COUNTRY, ITS DISTANCE FROM CENTERS OF INTERNATIONAL TENSION, ITS CIVILIAN ENERGY NEEDS, THE COMPATIBILITY OF ITS NUCLEAR PROGRAM WITH ITS ENERGY NEEDS, AND FINALLY, ITS WILLINGNESS TO SUBMIT TO INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARDS. A CAREFUL EVALUATION OF ALL THESE FACTORS MAKES IT IMPOSSIBLE TO MAINTAIN SUSPICIONS, PARTICULAR AMONG COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE TRADITIONALLY BEEN FRIENDLY. IN REALITY, IF A COUNTRY WERE TO DECIDE UPON A WEAPONS PROGRAM, THE WAY TO DO IT WOULD NOT BE THROUGH A SAFE-GUARDED ELECTRICAL GENERATION PROGRAM. IT COULD BE DONE MUCH MORE CHEAPLY, DIRECTLY, AND RAPIDLY BY ESTABLISHING A STRICTLY MILITARY PROGRAM, INVOLVING FOR EXAMPLE, RESEARCH REACTORS. THE TRUE MOTIVATION FOR EXTERNAL OPPOSITION TO OUR NUCLEAR PROGRAM IS POSSIBLY FOUND IN A COMPLEX OF MULTILATERAL

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AND BILATERAL FACTORS, OF POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND EVEN COMMERCIAL NATURE. THE BRAZILIAN POSITION ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS HAS BEEN OFTEN STATED. BRAZIL IS A FIRM DEFENDER OF NON-PROLIFERATION, BUT DOES NOT ACCEPT THAT NON-PROLIFERATION CONCEPTS APPLICABLE TO NUCLEAR WEAPONS BE UNDULY EXTENDED TO TECHNOLOGY INDISPENSABLE FOR THE PEACEFUL AND SAFEGUARDED UTILIZATION OF NUCLEAR ENERGY.

END UNCLASSIFIED SECTION.

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Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 25 may 1978
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Decaption Note:
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Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NUCLEAR ISSUE--REITERATION OF BRAZILIAN COMMITMENT TO REPROCESSING
TAGS: ENRG, TECH, MNUC, BR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/05fb4497-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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